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UNCLAS HANOI 000772

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV AND PRM, BANGKOK FOR REFUGEE COORDINATOR, GENEVA FOR RMA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM PREF VM CB HUMANR ETMIN

SUBJECT: GVN RESPONDS ON UNHCR MONITORING

Reftel: A) State 57206, B) Hanoi 215, C) Hanoi 671

¶11. (SBU) PolCouns and Poloff met with MFA Consular Department Deputy Director General Nguyen Minh Vu April 1 to deliver Ref A demarche on UNHCR monitoring of Montagnard returnees and the placement of permanent international staff in the UNHCR office in Hanoi. Vu listened to PolCouns' points and responded that the issue of monitoring returnees is "very difficult and sensitive" to the GVN. "Many people in our Government believe that some individuals working for the UNHCR organized Montagnards" to flee Vietnam. In the 2005 Tripartite Agreement (Ref. B), the GVN only agreed to "consider access" by the UNHCR to Montagnard returnees, depending on implementation of the agreement, Vu claimed. In that agreement, the GVN stated that returnees would not be punished, and the USG can "be assured" that the GVN will uphold its promise. Responding to PolCouns, he said that the GVN has no timetable for when visits can be conducted, but it "could discuss" the issue.

¶12. (SBU) Vu noted that three groups of returnees (totaling 35 persons) have now come back to Vietnam, the most recent on March 31. The GVN has some concerns about implementation of the Tripartite Agreement. Specifically, it is not receiving sufficient advance notice of repatriations. The GVN expects to deal with such issues at a three-way discussion of technical matters before any more Montagnards are returned, but Vu said he does not believe a date for such discussions has been set. He asked the USG to expedite the processing of Montagnards in Cambodia, noting that the one-month decision period for those who had been offered resettlement but have not taken it was now up. Vu acknowledged that the GVN does not know how the UNHCR is currently handling these cases.

¶13. (SBU) On the issue of permanent international staff for the UNHCR office in Hanoi, Vu said that the GVN has received such a request, but thought that, "for the time being, the current situation is more appropriate." The GVN will consider accepting international staff "based on the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement."

¶14. (SBU) Separately, UNHCR Officer in Charge Vu Anh Son (protect) told Poloff that, subsequent to their last discussion (Ref. C), the UNHCR had made a formal request in writing to the GVN to visit the first group of returnees. The GVN refused this request. The GVN also informed Son that he would be allowed to travel to the Vietnam - Cambodia border to witness the March 31 handover, but could not travel with the returnees to their home villages. Son welcomed the Embassy's support in urging the GVN to allow UNHCR visits.

MARINE